

LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **May 11, 2004**

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 12

CONSENT:

REGULAR: **X**

CLOSED SESSION:

(Confidential)

ACTION: **X**

INFORMATION:

ITEM TITLE: **Request to Support World No Tobacco Day**

RECOMMENDATION: Consider a request to waive the collection and payment of Meals Tax on May 31, 2004 to support restaurants that go "smoke free" on May 31, 2004 in support of World No Tobacco Day.

SUMMARY: The attached letter is a request from the South-Central Perinatal Council of Virginia for City Council to support World No Tobacco Day by waiving the collection of Meals Tax on May 31, 2004 as an incentive for restaurants to be smoke free that day.

PRIOR ACTION(S): none

FISCAL IMPACT: It is estimated that the Meals Tax collection for one day is between \$20,000 and \$25,000. The City has no mechanism to audit daily tax revenues and would be unable to verify the amount of waived tax collection from any individual establishment.

CONTACT(S): Kimball Payne, Mitch Nuckles

ATTACHMENT(S): Letter

REVIEWED BY: lkp



South-Central Perinatal Council of Virginia

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Lynchburg, Virginia 24503

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May 4, 2004

Mr. Kimball Payne
Lynchburg City Council
Lynchburg, Virginia

Dear Mr. Payne and Members of the City Council:

I am writing in reference to a health care issue that we, as citizens, have the power to improve through education and collaboration. The issue: the dangers related to exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke.

Secondhand smoke has been classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a known cause of lung cancer in humans. In 2000, the National Institutes of Health formally listed secondhand smoke as a known human carcinogen. Secondhand smoke is estimated by the EPA to cause approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths in nonsmokers each year.

Secondhand smoke can be harmful to children's health including asthma, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, bronchitis, pneumonia and ear infections. Children receiving high doses of secondhand smoke run the greatest risk of damaging health effects.

Smoking during pregnancy increases the likelihood of stillbirth, low birth weight and prematurity. Prematurity is now the leading cause of infant death during the first month of life. Exposure to smoke during pregnancy, and in infancy, is one of the most controllable, and preventable risk factors associated with infant mortality.

So what can we do? The South Central Perinatal Council has received a \$2,000.00 grant from the World No Tobacco Day Coalition (WNTD), to implement a WNTD activity. The proposal includes enlisting Lynchburg Restaurants to go completely smoke free for one day, World No Tobacco Day, May 31st. This will be the first time such an event will have taken place in Lynchburg, and the more restaurants that participate, the greater the impact will be. Approximately 24% of Virginians use tobacco. That would indicate that 75% of Virginians prefer to remain smoke-free. Smoke-free establishments in Lynchburg do not come near that percentage, and perhaps it is merely due to a misperception of what the public really wants and needs.

In order to encourage Lynchburg restaurants to participate in WNTD, we need to provide a strong incentive. This request is to allow restaurants that participate on May 31st by

going completely smoke free for one day to eliminate the meal tax for one day. This will encourage the public to patronize those restaurants on May 31st. By providing a smoke free environment that also saves the consumer 6% of their bill, more people will be encouraged to dine at these facilities. The South Central Perinatal Council will have educational materials at all participating sites, increasing the impact of WNTD. It will also give consumers the opportunity to demonstrate their preference for smoking vs. non-smoking restaurants.

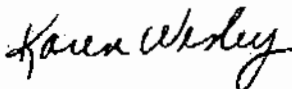
What is to be gained?

- The citizens of Lynchburg and the surrounding counties will appreciate the effort by the city of Lynchburg to improve the health of our communities
- Families will have the opportunity to dine out without the unhealthy side effect of environmental smoke exposure
- Free educational materials will be available to all patrons at participating businesses on the benefits of smoke-free environments to children, especially infants
- Increases in sales on May 31st will offset some of the loss of the meal tax revenue to Lynchburg. A Denny's manager in New Mexico was quoted as saying "for every smoker you lose, you gain a table of eight non-smokers."

The impact of our program on May 31st will be difficult to measure in dollars and cents. We don't know how many dollars will be saved by reducing asthma attacks and seeing less lower respiratory infections in the Emergency Room. What I am asking is for the City of Lynchburg to make an investment in Community Health, on one day, May 31, 2004.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Karen Wesley, Director
South Central Perinatal Council